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Guidance *in the* Elementary School

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Reprint

SCHOOL LIFE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF
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The following three articles were printed in the May, June, and July 1962 issues of School Life, official journal of the Office of Education. They are reprinted here under one cover, just as they appeared originally in School Life.

Guidance in the elementary school

The sooner a child with a handicap—emotional, social, or physical—is identified, the sooner he can overcome it, learn to compensate for it, or learn to live with it. But he cannot learn alone. Without the help of some understanding adult, his handicap sets him apart and interferes with his school work. Guidance consultants in elementary schools can help parents and teachers understand and aid children when they show the first signs of being handicapped. Here Dr. Eckerson and Mr. Smith, in the first of a series of three articles, discuss the need for guidance services in elementary schools.

TODAY'S young people will have to know far more than we know to live successfully in the adult world they are approaching, for theirs will be a world of greatly advanced knowledge, of automation, and of divergent influences. They will be responsible for local and national interests in a world of collaborating countries, a world in which new fields of specialization and old are demanding high-caliber men and women, men and women with knowledge, skills, and ability to communicate their ideas to others. If they are to compete successfully, adjust comfortably to the demands made on them, and maintain their balance and equanimity under a bombardment of new pressures, inventions, discoveries, and ideas foreign to their culture, they must be prepared now. It is the responsibility of the school to prepare them.

But the teacher alone cannot bear the full responsibility. He cannot grow with his subject, update his teaching methods with new media, motivate the gifted and enrich their curriculums, and give the necessary personal attention to the retarded, the underachiever, the handicapped, and all others with problems. He needs assistance in maintaining the physical and emotional health of all pupils

to enable them to profit from instruction. Guidance consultants (counselors) can give the elementary school teacher the assistance he needs. In the elementary school the guidance consultant works as a member of a non-instructional professional team made up of the school psychologist, school social worker, school nurse, physician, and perhaps others such as the hearing and speech specialist. The goal of this professional team is to discover and nurture the talents of all children from an early age and to assist each child in overcoming obstacles to his success in work and play. (These services are increasingly being organized within school systems and are known as *pupil personnel services*.) Guidance consultants and the other noninstructional specialists can use the contributions of medical and behavioral sciences to relieve the teacher's burden and lighten, if not always solve, the children's problems.

From our own experiences we know that children do have problems. Looking back at our childhood, we can recall that unfortunate misunderstanding, conditioning, and traumatic events early in our school life formed within us attitudes that lowered our effectiveness in learning and made childhood less than the happy period it should have been. Patterns of feeling, thinking, and acting—if not damaging, at least of little worth—became entrenched in our impressionable years because no understanding adult took note of them, foresaw their consequences, and took measures to change them. Some of us suffered acutely from such "defects" as red hair, unusual height, plumpness, hand-me-down clothes, and second-generation cultures. To make matters worse, our awkward efforts to disguise shyness and insecurity were often misinterpreted. No one thought to point out that to be different in some respects has its advantages.

Most children are occasionally distressed by comparatively small and common problems; others are overwhelmed by severe handicaps and unable by themselves to work out reasonable adjustments. A child who is set apart from other children by his defects, real or imagined, may readily become different from others in his emotions, attitudes, and general behavior. His difference may be a spur to drive him forward; it may be the soil from which

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his creativity springs; it may be a trait or a condition which needs correction; or it may be a defect to which the child must adjust. Whether his deviation from the norm is an asset or a liability depends on the quality and extent of guidance in his development.

Without someone—parent, teacher, or guidance consultant—to help him strengthen, correct, and adjust to a characteristic that sets him apart he may walk alone—unhappily. But some intelligent and conscientious parents and teachers are not equipped by education and experience to sense the qualities in a child who feels different and is therefore limited. Furthermore, many parents themselves need aid in adjusting to their children's problems; even well-meaning parents may sentence a gifted child to mediocrity or harm a personality by misplaced sympathy. Guidance consultants have the education and experience to help adults who are responsible for the environment of children.

As the contributions of guidance consultants are more widely recognized, school administrators are expanding their programs. Discerning teachers have accepted the principle of guidance—the concept of the worth of every person with all the characteristics peculiar to him—and are reflecting the guidance point of view in their classroom. One case in point is the change in teachers' attitudes: Few now rate conformity, or the leveling of differences, higher than individuality. Until recently most of the expansion in guidance services has been in secondary schools. Now, however, as administrators are realizing that guidance can aid in developing individual worth and can lend a new dimension to the education and maturation of children, they are extending their programs to the lower grades. It is time for us to take a look at the guidance services they are providing.

The philosophy of guidance holds that guidance services should be continuous, beginning when the child enters kindergarten and following him at least until he completes his education. Guidance in the elementary school assists *all* pupils directly, and indirectly through their teachers and parents, in making the maximum use of their abilities for their own development and for the good of society. It emphasizes the early recognition of intellectual, emotional, social, and physical strength and weakness; the encouragement of talents; the prevention of conditions which interfere with learning; and the early use of available resources to meet the needs of children.

Not only does an elementary school guidance program help children who have minor and temporary troubles—that means all children—but it influences behind-the-scenes activities which affect every child. Guidance consultants working in elementary schools have the responsibility for enriching teachers' understanding of normal child de-

velopment and for measures dealing with incipient problems of learning and behavior. Through inservice education and informal conferences, guidance consultants aid teachers in anticipating and subsequently meeting classroom situations with understanding and composure. With the professional support of a guidance consultant, a well-prepared teacher feels more secure in his teaching methods.

In a well-coordinated guidance program measures should be taken early in a child's school life to prevent or remove educational, psychological, and physical deterrents to motivation and learning. For example, a gifted pupil should be identified in the early grades, for it is only the unusual student who can in his high school years overcome his indifference to study or his parents' opposition to changes in his plans and seek a college education. Together the school and the home should work from kindergarten on to motivate gifted children and to plan for education appropriate to their intellectual level. Motivation for higher education does not always start in high school; it may begin with attitudes toward education in the home, study habits in the lower grades, and an early enjoyment of learning and discovery.

Conditions in and out of school create problems for children and increase the need for early guidance. Among them are these:

Crowded classrooms.—Although 1,700,000 more children were enrolled in elementary and secondary schools in 1959–60 than in the previous year¹ there was not a proportional increase in the number of qualified teachers. Classes are oversized, and too many temporary, inadequately prepared teachers stand before them. In such classrooms, a withdrawn child may be overlooked rather than helped, and an entire class as well as the teacher may suffer frustration caused by one aggressive child.

Population mobility.—Ours is an industrial mobile society in which one-fifth of the population moves each year from one home to another. In 1958, 12 million children were displaced to the extent that they left one set of familiar faces and had to adjust to new surroundings, friends, and teachers.²

Employment of mothers.—About 30 percent of the mothers who have children under 18 years of age are working; over 20 percent of this 30 percent have children under six.³ When both parents are employed outside the

¹ *Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, p. 228. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

² *Children in a Changing World*, Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth, p. 7. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

³ *Children in a Changing World*, Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth, p. 10. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

home, children suffer from the lack of companionship and supervision and weakened family ties.

Broken homes.—Approximately 13 percent of youngsters under 18 years of age lack the guidance of 2 parents because their homes have been broken by death, divorce, or desertion.⁴ To these unfortunate children may be added 202,000 born out of wedlock,⁵ over a million mentally retarded children of school age,⁶ 470,000 delinquency cases,⁷ and physically handicapped children numbering in the millions.⁸ These conditions are frequently accompanied by educational, emotional, social, or physical problems.

Children in a Changing World, a publication of the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth, says of emotional disorders in youth: "No reliable data exist on the prevalence of childhood psychiatric disorders. But in 1955, 1,200 outpatient psychiatric clinics in the country reported that about 212,000 children under the age of 21 had been under diagnosis or care during the year."⁹ Emotional disorders have their roots in attitudes of the past as well as in situations of the present. Guidance personnel, alert to signs of damaging emotions in children, may help to change conditions which evoke such emotions.

Maladjustment in children may manifest itself in anti-social behavior. On the early detection of delinquent tendencies, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck state: "... in a sample of 500 persistent delinquents from the underprivileged areas of Boston, the average age at onset of maladapted behavior was somewhat over eight years, with almost half the group showing clear signs of anti-sociality at seven or younger, and nine-tenths at ten or younger. . . ." ¹⁰ No one would place the blame for delinquency at the school door, but the school may help in preventing it. The unsuccessful pupil and the maladjusted one—both potential dropouts—are prone to seek satisfaction

out of school in nonacademic outlets. They may find their satisfaction in delinquent acts committed with other members of the "out" group.

The need for guidance services in the elementary school has recently been advocated by educational leaders. After an extensive survey, James B. Conant recommends: "In a satisfactory school system the counseling should start in the elementary school" ¹¹ Conant's conclusions regarding American education, along with the findings of the White House Conference on Children and Youth, resulted in the Conference on Unemployed Out-of-School Youth in Urban Areas, reported in *Social Dynamite*: "During the 1960s, the Department of Labor estimates, some 7.5 million youngsters will drop out before high school graduation. About 2.5 million will not go beyond the eighth grade; two out of three will go no further than the tenth grade Most dropouts come from lower-income families. A high proportion are classified as 'slow learners,' though many may have higher intelligence than their I.Q. tests indicate and simply lack incentive to perform better. Most dropouts are weak in reading and arithmetic and are likely to have a consistent record of subject or grade failure starting in elementary school." ¹²

The fact that pupils who leave school before graduation from high school will find it difficult to earn a living is implied by the occupational outlook as summed up in *Manpower Challenge of the 1960s*, published by the U.S. Department of Labor: "During the coming decade . . . the fastest growth will occur among professional and technical occupations Among the manual occupations, the need for skilled craftsmen will increase, but the number of unskilled jobs will stay about the same, continuing their long term relative decline . . . the biggest increases will occur in occupations requiring the most education and training." ¹³ This projection calls for measures to an early foundation for retention of students in school and for occupational orientation. An elementary guidance program encompasses these goals.

Furthermore, it is democratic, economical, and nationally beneficial to assist every person in preparing for a way of life consistent with his interests, special talents, and general abilities, for the goal of a democracy is the well-being of each individual and the aggregate worth of

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 21.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 22.

⁶ *Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, p. 196. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

⁷ *Children in a Changing World*, Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth, p. 24. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

⁸ *Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, p. 196. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

⁹ *Children in a Changing World*, Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth, p. 39. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

¹⁰ Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *Predicting Delinquency and Crime*, p. 114-115. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1959.

¹¹ James B. Conant, *The American High School Today*, p. 44. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1959.

¹² *Social Dynamite*, The Report of the Conference on Unemployed, Out-of-School Youth in Urban Areas, p. 15-16. 1145 19th Street, NW., Washington 6, D.C., National Committee for Children and Youth, 1961.

¹³ *Manpower Challenge of the 1960s*, U.S. Department of Labor, p. 10-11. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

all Americans. Guidance is based on the assumption that both the person and society profit when the worker is happy in his job.

Recent events have put the spotlight on a national waste in manpower which elementary as well as high schools may lessen by fully recognizing and nurturing the talents of children. An unpublished study on this subject was cited in the *New York Times Magazine*, 1961: "Our latest overall figures on school and college dropouts come from a nationwide study prepared last year for the National Science Foundation. . . . It shows that of the group comprising, intellectually, the top 30 percent of the Nation's youth, about 90 percent of both sexes graduate from high school, about two-thirds of the boys and one-half of the girls get to college. . . ." ¹⁴

Professional and lay organizations have spoken out recently on the urgency for guidance services for all children beginning in kindergarten and extending throughout school. They frequently emphasize human values such as encouraging talents, promoting better adjustment to foster higher quality of work, or increasing happiness of the disturbed pupil and his family. From a purely mercenary viewpoint, they say, elementary school guidance promises to pay off in large figures. Considering the astronomical sums of money that go toward caring for emotionally disturbed patients, apprehending and im-

prisoning criminals, and providing for the delinquent, indigent, and unemployed, even an ounce of prevention through early and continuous guidance seems to warrant the investment.

Events of these times place an added burden on school children to acquire more education in breadth and depth, and on teachers to use new techniques in crowding more knowledge into young heads. Instead of having one teacher who knows him, his brothers and sisters, and his parents as he might have had in the past, the elementary school child of the 1970's may be taught by a team of teachers, each with special preparation to teach one subject; or he may find in his classroom an assistant teacher to help with routine matters and a master teacher whose influence will inspire and motivate both the regular teacher and the pupils. The success of new developments in education is predicated on the receptivity of each child to learn. An elementary school guidance program working within pupil personnel services brings to all children, directly and through their teachers and parents, professional aid to help them learn. In this way, education becomes a collaborative effort.

¹⁴ John U. Monro, "Proposed: A National Talent Hunt," *New York Times Magazine*, p. 37. April 23, 1961.

Guidance in elementary schools: Successful practices

A YOUNG CHILD seldom recognizes a problem which limits his performance in school. One with a sensory defect does not know that he fails to see or hear all that other children see and hear. He is not aware that his lack of interest in reading is related to emotional stress at home. He can not tell why his work in school falls below his parents' and teachers' expectations, and he has little conception of what those expectations are.

An understanding of a child's difficulties must come by way of the sensitive perception and sound interpretation of his behavior by adults. The child's own words can lead, and at the same time, mislead parents and teachers who try to unravel cause and effect in motivation and achievement.

When a child says "I hate to read," "I don't feel like playing," or "I can't talk in class; I'm scared," his remarks may mean nothing or they may be danger signals, symptoms of disturbance. If his teacher hears him, she is sympathetic, and she is sensitive to his troubles even when he doesn't complain. But because she has a crowded teaching schedule, 35 other children, and a limited guidance background, she may do little more than ask superficial questions, resolve to observe him more closely, and hope that time will bring improvement.

Unfortunately, time alone isn't likely to bring improvement; instead it lets the cause of his disturbance cut deeper grooves into his personality and affect many aspects of his life. By the time he reaches high school it may be too late to change his educational, emotional, social, or health pattern. And even if it can be changed significantly, it has already been detrimental to his development for 6 to 8 years. With proper guidance things could have been different. The cause of his troubles could have been identified earlier.

Secondary school counselors have learned through experience that the characteristics that prevent the gifted child from doing superior work and those that are typical of the dropout and the delinquent were well developed when these children entered high school. Moreover, research has proved that children's unhealthy habits, physi-

cal defects, poor work patterns, neurotic traits, retardation in school work, or antisocial behavior can usually be detected in the elementary grades.

But detection isn't enough; it is merely the first step; the cause of the disturbance must be found and if possible removed. The cause might be any one of a number of things—loneliness, poor home environment, fear. All of these handicaps and others may affect a child's ability to learn, and not only his own but his classmates', for a disturbed child can disrupt the whole class by aggressive behavior or slow it down by his poor work habits. Some of these causes—poor home environment, for instance—are inherent in social conditions for which the school is not responsible. But some for which the school is responsible cannot be corrected by teachers who lack the time and the professional background necessary to recognize and interpret symptoms and give the children the guidance they need. Here a specialist is called for, one who is skilled in identifying early signs of trouble and who has professional knowledge, insight, and techniques of guidance. The earlier in children's lives the specialist begins his work, the greater his chances of helping them make good use of their capacities.

The elementary school is the logical place for guidance services to begin. As soon as a child enters school he should be observed and studied to determine ways in which he differs from other children so that his good traits can be developed and his weak or damaging traits corrected, or educational provisions made for him to minimize the effect of his limitations.

For a long time teachers and principals have performed some guidance services for elementary school children, and a few schools have had guidance specialists. In the last few years, however, an increasing number of schools from California to Connecticut have set up guidance programs staffed with personnel selected specifically to meet the needs of elementary school children. Specialists in these programs who have had experience in helping elementary school children overcome their difficulties know that guidance in elementary schools is quite different from guidance in high schools. Services on both levels aid pupils in reaching a higher step in their development, but the nature of the higher step and the maturity of the children dictate the functions of guidance and the training of guidance consultants.

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Since children everywhere have some common needs, guidance programs set up to meet their needs have many similar functions. But since elementary school programs have evolved from local conditions and local theories on how to improve those conditions, the services offered children differ from school to school in organization, personnel, and emphasis of the program. Because of these differences in communities, a program that serves children well in one school is not necessarily a good model for another. School officials planning to organize guidance services cannot therefore always adopt a tailor-made program. But since they may get some helpful suggestions from practices that have proved successful elsewhere we list several here. These practices represent a composite of 24 elementary school guidance programs considered outstanding by State directors of guidance.

► The program is one part of a broader organization of services offered by the school system and community. These are usually called *pupil personnel services*, and in addition to guidance consultants, utilize school psychologists, school social workers, physicians, nurses, attendance coordinators, and perhaps other professional personnel such as speech and hearing specialists.

► The program serves all children, not just those with serious problems. All children benefit when teachers and parents understand the difficulties that go along with normal maturation. All children have minor problems from time to time.

► The guidance consultant is at the center of the program which involves the entire school staff. The teacher, assisted and supported by the consultant, applies guidance principles to classroom instruction.

► The consultant's functions are to—

Test and observe children who are having difficulties in learning, are underachievers, show signs of emotional disturbances, need curricular adjustment or placement in special classes, or are considered for referral to other specialists.

Counsel children with problems when the nature of the problem and the child's maturity indicate that counseling would be helpful.

Consult with teachers, principal, and parents to help them understand normal children and children with problems; use information derived from tests, observation, cumulative records, and conferences with children and adults.

Refer children needing intensive diagnosis to pupil personnel specialists and community agencies and help plan programs to carry out their recommendations.

Provide inservice training for teachers to aid them in meeting difficult classroom situations through understanding normal and abnormal behavior of children; help them understand how they should motivate children in taking intelligence and achievement tests, why they must follow directions exactly as stated in the test manual, what errors in administration and scoring can distort test results, how test scores should be interpreted to children and parents, how test data can be used to improve classroom teaching; and contribute to their understanding of mental health, maintenance and use of cumulative records, and techniques of interviewing parents.

Develop programs for group guidance in such areas as common personal problems, study habits, occupational orientation, and preparation for the secondary school.

Help children who need them obtain glasses, hearing aids, clothes, food, and other essentials.

Interpret the guidance program to parent and community organizations.

Conduct research and evaluative studies dealing with the effectiveness of the program.

► The consultant's background usually includes successful teaching experience in the elementary school, State certification for guidance personnel, and a master's degree in guidance.

Since guidance programs are planned to meet the needs of communities differing in cultural, economic, and social values and in educational opportunities, the functions of a particular consultant may be determined, at least in part, by a number of conditions: (1) the home environment and neighborhood of the pupils (for example, pupils from slum areas and pupils from well-to-do areas have different needs); (2) the consultant-pupil ratio; (3) attitudes of the administrators toward the consultant's activities (no program can be successful without the support of the faculty and administrators); (4) his own education, work experience, and personal qualifications which enable him to serve more effectively in some functions (such as remedial reading, group counseling, or play therapy) than in others; and (5) the extent to which other professional services are available (he may have to take over some functions of a school psychologist or school social worker if none is available).

While practices relating to guidance programs in most schools have much in common, there are some significant differences which merit study. Some of these are reported here to stimulate further experimentation to the end that each school may develop a program which most effectively serves its pupils.

A large city which has 180 full-time guidance consultants working in elementary schools is experimenting with this procedure:

To achieve the objects of early identification and prevention, 42 teams consisting of a counselor, a half-time social worker, and a half-time psychologist have been assigned to 47 schools. They will work exclusively in grades K-3 with concentration of efforts on grade 2. City-wide, the program deals with a cross section of the school population. Every child in the second grade and some children from grades K, 1 and 3 in these schools will be studied by the teams.

The program is concerned with the positive aspects of learning, child development, and personality growth, as well as with problems of maladjustment. . . . The team will review referrals from teachers, review records, and observe children in classrooms and other school situations . . . plan and decide on procedures . . . work with children individually and with teachers and parents through interviews, conferences and workshops.

In the same city another experimental project launched in 1959 employs 78 counselors in 52 elementary schools and 13 junior high schools:

Higher Horizons . . . [provides] for teacher training, remedial instruction, and cultural enrichment. The goal . . . is the raising of educational and vocational sights of *all* students—bright, average, or slow. . . . This includes intensive work with parents. . . . Because of the recognized need for early identification and appropriate stimulation of talent of any kind, attention will be focused . . . on the third grade . . . and the seventh grade . . . and will progress with the children from grade to grade. . . . [The] project must depend upon existing school and community resources for clinical help and the financing of the cultural enrichment program.

A project on the West Coast led to these conclusions:

. . . the traditional roles of the psychologist, psychometrist, social worker, or counselor in the elementary school need modification . . . Our investigation . . . [indicates] a need for a staff specialist . . . to serve . . . teachers, principal, and parents [relating to] . . . the child's intellectual and personal development. A minimum of professional training is seen as that of the clinical psychologist, psychiatric social worker, or the pupil personnel specialist from the field of educational guidance and counseling with clinical experience. . . .

The job of this staff specialist is to help teachers obtain the most useful information and services from pupil personnel specialists and to help them understand specialists' reports, and to help parents understand what they may expect of their children. One part of this project included directed classroom observation by guidance specialists, teachers, and parents of first-grade children. Its objectives were to acquaint parents with classroom teaching procedures and methods of working with children differing in maturity and to point out to them ways in which

they could contribute to their own children's success and to the school program. To achieve its objectives, the school planned four 2-hour meetings: one for orientation and development of a guide to classroom observation; two for classroom observation and group discussion; and one for further observation or discussion and evaluation.

An Eastern town makes these provisions for testing:

The guidance staff includes a full-time counselor in each of our schools. . . . Intelligence testing is done at all levels on an individual basis. . . . At the elementary level a preschool test (Stanford-Binet) and interview with each child are scheduled in the summer prior to kindergarten. . . . Standardized achievement tests . . . in the spring . . . measure [the pupils'] yearly progress. . . . The results . . . indicate areas in the curriculum which need to be strengthened or revised.

A superintendent in a Midwest community says:

After a teacher with teaching experiences in both rural and elementary schools and in diagnostic and remedial reading was contacted, plans were made for establishing [him] . . . as an elementary classroom teacher, as a part of the preparation to assume the work of directing the guidance activities. A counselor-trainer [assisted] in the professional preparation of the selected teacher. Extension and summer sessions were utilized . . . and plans were completed for the beginning of the services the following year.

A school system in an Eastern city provides for extensive orientation for the guidance consultant who spends the first week visiting—

. . . each department: Aptitude testing; research, measurements and statistics; special education; special services for pupils; vocational education . . . social service exchange, family and children's society, department of public welfare, mental hygiene clinics, district health office. . . . After the counselors start work in their schools, visits are arranged to the juvenile court and to psychiatric clinics.

During his second week he reports to an elementary school where an experienced guidance consultant arranges his schedule to demonstrate as many activities as possible. The new consultant ". . . sits in on interviews; goes on home visits; observes group work with pupils; learns to make a class study, to record interviews, to refer pupils for aptitude testing, to keep a daily record of his work as a basis for his monthly and semi-annual reports, and attends conferences with the principal and teachers."

In this system the orientation of the faculty is as important as the orientation of the guidance consultant. The assistant director of guidance explains to the faculty the philosophy of the program, the aims and methods of working and the relationships with teachers, parents, administrators, school social workers, home visitors, nurses, doctors, and other school personnel.

A large community in the West requires its guidance

specialist (called visiting teacher) to hold a credential in pupil personnel services; to have 2 years of successful teaching experience *or* the equivalent in supervised field experience (school social work, school psychometry, or school psychology) including one year in a public school; and to have one year of graduate work consisting of course work and field experience in a general area of pupil personnel practices and procedures and a specialized area in pupil counseling, child welfare and attendance work, school social work, or school psychometry.

A Southern city says of its experiment with inservice training of teachers:

We chose certain elementary schools [interested in] co-operating. . . . In each [school] several children who showed signs of personal problems were identified during the year. Each student was seen individually, his problem evaluated, and [a remedial plan] designed. The child's teacher, a team of counselors and psychologists from the central office, the school principal, the visiting counselor from the area office, and others . . . were active in the evaluation. After [examining the factors] involved in [his] problem and . . . their relative importance, [a conference of the entire faculty] was held at the school. . . .

Each person assisting in the evaluation explained his perception of the problem. . . . Each teacher was encouraged to comment on the case and to draw from her own experiences similar situations. . . . A general program evolved which would strengthen the student's personality, and . . . the teachers examined themselves . . . in light of the role they play in building good mental health.

A Midwest city started an "elementary adjustment service" in 1936. Now each school has an adjustment teacher selected by the principal from the school faculty on the basis of qualification and interest, and trained by the supervisor of the elementary adjustment service. The adjustment teacher starts the program for each child by administering the reading readiness test in the first grade.

A large Eastern city which dates its guidance program from 1917 has 142 "counseling teachers" working in the elementary schools. Each counseling teacher is given inservice training equivalent to 11½ days a week for 11½ years with emphasis on social work techniques.

These are some of the theories underlying guidance practices in different programs:

That the guidance program serves a child indirectly:
"When feasible, the pupil has not been aware of the participation of the guidance consultant. . . . The individual pupil-interview has served in some cases where environmental modifications were difficult to obtain. . . ."

That the guidance program serves the child directly:
"The typical elementary school of 1970 will have at

least one full-time professionally prepared counselor [who] will be able to devote about sixty percent of his time to work with children, [and the rest] to work with teachers and parents."

That the program should develop certain attitudes:
". . . the teacher makes a major contribution to the objective of guidance by . . . recognizing adjustment needs as more urgent than learning needs . . . emphasizing the development of talents rather than the correction of deficiencies . . . recognizing the pupil's attitude toward the teacher as well as the teacher's attitude toward the pupil. . . ."

That the limitations of guidance services should be observed: "It is important for teachers and counselors to be alert to signs of conflict but it is unwise to attempt to treat symptoms. A relationship exists between symptoms and causal factors, but the two should not be confused. Treatment of symptoms is apt only to exaggerate them, without removing cause. The business of the teacher and the counselor then is to be aware of the kinds of behavior that indicate conflict, then see that help is available for the individual exhibiting the behavior."

That certain responsibilities are NOT functions of the guidance consultant: "The licensed counselor shall NOT be assigned to classroom teaching . . . shall handle and advise in disciplinary cases but shall not mete out punishment. . . . Shall not be required to perform yard, hall, cafeteria, or similar duties, except in extreme emergencies."

All the excerpts and abstracts we have included here concern guidance services coordinated and strengthened by guidance specialists even though the terminology used to describe them varies across the country: guidance consultant, counselor, visiting teacher, adjustment teacher, counseling teacher. The practices and theories also show that elementary school guidance programs and the training of guidance consultants are not standardized. This heterogeneity may be a sign of healthy growth and pragmatic planning which should be extended. At this point, we do not know whether standardization is desirable, and if so, in what direction. We should be able to find the answer through further experimentation.

Logically, the preparation of the guidance consultant should parallel the services which are most needed to help children learn in the classroom. These needs should be identified before graduate programs for guidance can be specified, and before State certification freezes the requirements for guidance personnel in elementary schools. It is possible that a variety of guidance consultants may best serve a variety of schools.

Elementary school guidance: the consultant

FIFTY YEARS ago, the school boy's world was small, and man remained in it. Cities were communities in which people had roots and knew each other, and the streets were safe at night. Jobs were plentiful, the schools were uncrowded, the dullard dropped by the wayside, and teachers could teach those who wished to learn.

Now, 50 years later, the child in elementary school begins to feel adult pressures, and youth problems relating to college admission as well as underachievement, drop-outs, and delinquency. The times demand that children be prepared to meet the challenge of a forward-looking society, that they be equipped in education, physical health, and emotional stability to work at jobs which do not yet exist. Guidance, starting in the early school years and continuing at least throughout school is a partial solution to the gigantic problem of preparing youth for the unknown future.

The elementary school guidance movement, focused on facilitating a sound educational foundation in the child's early years, is spreading throughout the country. It has gained momentum—even without financial encouragement from the National Defense Education Act, which has accelerated guidance in secondary schools. Its existence is just beginning to be recognized by representation at the State level, although State certification rarely makes any distinction between the qualifications required for guidance personnel in elementary and secondary schools. Only a few colleges and universities have initiated graduate programs specifically tailored to prepare the guidance consultant who works with young children.

The guidance movement for children in the lower grades has received its impetus from local educators and parents who believe that professional assistance given to the child at an early age will prevent his developing serious problems later. Across the country, the aim of early guidance is summed up in two words, "identification and prevention."

A review of some outstanding programs in elementary schools suggests the following definition: Guidance in the

elementary school assists *all* children directly, and indirectly through their teachers and parents, in making maximum use of their abilities for their own development and for the good of society. The emphasis is on the early recognition of intellectual, emotional, social, and physical strengths and weaknesses, on the developing of talents, on the prevention of conditions which interfere with learning, and on the early use of available resources to meet the needs of children.

Community planning for "identification and prevention" has centered attention on designating the services most needed within a school, and then looking for the person with education and experience to perform those services. Many communities have chosen an elementary school teacher who seemed to possess the necessary insight and encouraged him to supplement his education with courses relating to guidance and, subsequently, to assume the role of guidance consultant. Usually, the only graduate program available to him was designed as preparation for guidance work and counseling with adolescent students whose problems were conceived to be largely educational and vocational.

The elementary school child's needs do not call for emphasis on educational and vocational counseling; few of these youngsters are mature enough to make valid decisions for themselves by means of the counseling interview, nor are they concerned with choices of courses or vocations. The problems of grade-school pupils are caused by conditions which interfere with learning in school, and these may be attributed to tensions in the home, physical defects or poor health, poor social relations, emotional blocks, and intellectual limitations, as well as unsatisfactory methods of instruction and pupil-teacher relations. What, then, should be the qualifications of a guidance consultant who would be able to identify early signs of trouble in a child and get remedial help for him?

There is no simple answer, for children have many kinds of problems. For example, if a child's reading problem is caused by faulty reading techniques, perhaps a former teacher in the primary grades with courses in guidance and remedial reading might be highly qualified to handle it. If, however, his reading difficulty is caused by emotional stress in his home or lack of social adjustment, or by a visual defect or his physical condition, a specialist in another field might possess the requisite knowledge and

This is the last in a series of articles on elementary school guidance. Dr. Eckerson and Mr. Smith are specialists in school personnel services in the Guidance and Counseling Program Branch, Office of Education.

understanding to identify the source of trouble and take steps toward helping him.

In addition to poor readers, elementary school classrooms hold children who are retarded, aggressive, withdrawn, unloved, undernourished, overweight, defective in speech and hearing, and who have a host of other limitations. Classrooms also hold gifted and talented children whose abilities are not recognized or challenged, and whose mediocre performance is accepted at home and at school. What qualifications should the consultant have to work with these children?

The function of the guidance consultant, dictated by the varied needs of children, raises the question: are guidance services in elementary schools developing as a new discipline? If guidance functions at this level are not teacher functions, nor the functions of the high school counselor, then it is possible that the guidance of young school children may be moving in the direction of a new discipline requiring a new focus on professional preparation. And if so, what should be emphasized?

Some educators believe that early guidance is an extension of the elementary school teacher's job and that consequently only a person with teaching experience can effectively work with teachers in the child's behalf. And some believe that no essential difference exists in the functions of guidance personnel at the elementary and secondary school levels. Others maintain that guidance of elementary school children requires the knowledge, insight, and techniques possessed by the school psychologist, school social worker, clinical psychologist, psychiatric social worker, or school nurse.

The profusion of specialists nominated for the post of being responsible for the guidance of grade-school children attests to a diversity of opinion, both on problems and on remedies. Each specialist sees the problems which children bring into the classroom, or develop there, as they pertain to his branch of knowledge. Also, each specialist who attempts to diagnose a difficulty may be limited to some extent in his grasp of those causal factors which lie outside of his particular field. Each has depth in the knowledge and techniques of his own discipline; each has breadth without depth in some aspects of allied disciplines. Which professional emphasis with what techniques will be most effective in helping children with their problems is a debatable question. Since the answer awaits clarifying evidence, it seems practical to encourage experimentation and evaluation of pilot programs before standardizing guidance services and the qualifications for guidance personnel in elementary schools.

In some States specialists who have different professional titles but whose services overlap are working in elementary school guidance programs. In California and

Connecticut, for instance, schools recognize the contributions of graduate preparation in guidance, psychology, and social work by using persons with professional training in these fields in their guidance programs. A pamphlet published by the Connecticut State Department of Education delineates the similarities and dissimilarities in the preparation and roles of the guidance consultant (and counselor at the secondary level), the school social worker, and the school psychologist. It has this to say of the common aspects of their functions:

- a. Each tries to help pupils to utilize their abilities more fully, to overcome problems, to understand themselves more clearly, and to make better progress in school. . . . As a part of this help, each studies pupils' backgrounds, abilities, and psychological forces. Each works with the pupil individually or may seek special help for him from others.
- b. Each renders service in cooperation with the school staff. The teacher has the major educational responsibility for each pupil; the social worker, psychologist, and counselor are concerned with facilitating the work of the teacher. . . .
- c. Each develops and maintains information and records about pupils. . . .
- d. Each has a real interest in research. . . .
- e. Each of the three professions shares with other school personnel a responsibility for working with parents and community groups to facilitate the progress of individual children and also to interpret the work of the school. . . .¹

The pamphlet answers the question, What are the distinctive emphases of the work of each of the three professions? "The *social worker* has emphasized work with pupils who have, or appear likely to have, serious problems of school adjustment which also involve aspects of social or emotional adjustment. These problems often can be more successfully solved if home or other community forces are utilized to help and the social worker has a major role in work with both parents and community social agencies. . . . The *psychologist* has emphasized work with pupils who have serious learning or behavior difficulties due to mental, physical, or emotional handicaps and for whom an intensive clinical psychological diagnosis is sought by the school. . . . The *counselor* has emphasized work with all pupils in the school on educational . . . and personal problems which are common among the age groups with which he is working."

Writing about elementary school guidance services, Raymond Patouillet says: "The school guidance worker (*counselor, psychologist, visiting teacher* [now generally called social worker]) works primarily with and through teachers as well as with parents and the principal, serving

¹ *The Team Approach in Pupil Personnel Services*, Connecticut State Department of Education, p. 36-38. Hartford, 1955.

as consultant and resource person to them. The guidance person works with children through the class setting, although individual conferences with parents and children are held if referral to an outside agency is indicated or if individual testing or interviewing is agreed upon by the teacher and guidance person. I have grouped counselors, psychologists, and visiting teachers together under the general heading of guidance worker because I see an increasing number of similarities and a decreasing number of differences among their respective roles."²

In discussing the role of the elementary school guidance consultant, Patouillet adds: "The term counselor therefore no longer adequately describes his function if we think of counseling as a one-to-one relationship. . . . The guidance worker . . . is essentially a consultant . . . in human relations who involves in a cooperative enterprise all those who affect the development of the child."

Patouillet's proposal for meeting the personnel needs of elementary school guidance programs is twofold: (1) Utilization of persons who have already completed programs in guidance, psychology, or social work; and (2) a 2-year graduate program which cuts across the areas of guidance, psychology, and social work. His proposals are not intended to eliminate the need for and use of itinerant school psychologists and school social workers who work intensively with children on a referral basis.

Both the Connecticut pamphlet and Patouillet recognize common functions belonging to three disciplines which are important to the guidance of young children. This idea presents a challenge to determine through experimentation and research the best procedures for selecting and preparing persons to fill children's needs for guidance.

The consideration of guidance personnel recruited from fields other than teaching was recommended by the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth:

That all States require the certification of guidance counselors and other specialized personnel. That the qualifications for certification be continually reviewed and strengthened in accordance with the latest research findings in the field; and *that they recognize and give credit to appropriate training and work experience in lieu of classroom teaching.*³ (Italics are ours.)

A program designed to serve in lieu of classroom teaching might resemble an internship required by the University of Michigan in preparing school psychologists. Such an internship could be planned to familiarize both social workers and psychologists with the practices and

problems of teachers and children at the elementary school level. William Clark Trow describes the internship:

All students preparing to become school psychologists will enroll for a practicum requiring three hours a day for a minimum of one semester in the University School. During this time under the guidance of a special supervisor they will attend a number of different grades and classes ranging from the kindergarten through grade 12, participate in instructional as well as measurement and guidance activities, and study and follow through on individual instructional and adjustment problem cases. We believe that this range of experience will be even more valuable than that of teaching a particular grade or subject for a year or two.⁴

Such an internship could give social workers and psychologists a first-hand knowledge of elementary schools. Just as a teacher gains his understanding of children and schools by his course in practice teaching, the psychologist and social worker could supplement their formal preparation with experiences provided by an elementary school internship. This supervised internship might well give them a broader understanding of children of all ages than they would gain from 3 years of teaching experience in the sixth or the first grade.

Universities are beginning to organize graduate programs to prepare guidance consultants for elementary schools. Among them is Teachers College, Columbia University, which offers 1-year, 2-year, and 3-year programs. It recommends the 2-year sequence for those who will work on a local elementary school staff. It is inevitable that more and more graduate schools will specify courses to prepare elementary school teachers, and perhaps persons with undergraduate majors in behavioral sciences, for guidance in elementary schools.

Hill and Nitzschke report information given by 154 directors of master's degree programs recommended for elementary school guidance personnel. They conclude:

Preparation programs for guidance workers in elementary schools are as yet not well-defined. Some of these programs make little, if any, differentiation between preparation for the elementary school and preparation for the secondary school. Very few universities have clearly planned programs for the preparation of guidance workers in elementary schools . . . It would seem that the time is at hand for leaders in elementary education and in guidance to combine their judgments to formulate a clearer definition of "elementary school guidance."⁵

⁴ William Clark Trow, "Diagnostician, EdS, and PhD Programs for School Psychologists in Michigan," *American Psychologist*, p. 84-85, 1333 Sixteenth Street, NW., Washington 6, D.C., American Psychological Association, Inc., February 1961.

⁵ George E. Hill and Dale F. Nitzschke, "Preparation Programs in Elementary School Guidance," *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, p. 155-159. 1605 New Hampshire Avenue NW., Washington 9, D.C., American Personnel and Guidance Association, Inc., October 1961.

² Raymond Patouillet, "Organizing for Guidance in the Elementary School," *Teachers College Record*, p. 435. New York, Columbia University, May 1957.

³ *Recommendations, Composite Report of Forum Findings, Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth*, p. 26. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

Who should be selected and how he should be prepared to achieve the goals of elementary school guidance may vary from school to school because the problems of large numbers of children differ from community to community—from slums to suburbs, from industrial to agricultural areas, from native to foreign culture groups. Moreover, a school's need for guidance services varies in proportion to the available services of social workers and psychologists. Each school, before employing a specialist, should therefore analyze the problems of its student body and select the person whose education and experience prepare him to offer the required services, regardless of his title.

When school social workers and school psychologists are selected as guidance consultants, they may wish to retain their identity in name. However, many people have the mistaken belief that social workers help only the poor, and that psychologists work only with the unbalanced. For this reason, it might serve the purposes of public acceptance as well as uniformity if such noninstructional specialists, engaged in helping children learn in school, were known by a single title such as counselor, child consultant, or guidance consultant. (The term *guidance consultant* is used here to differentiate between guidance personnel in the elementary school and counselors in the secondary school, and to indicate the major function of the former—which is usually designated as consulting with teachers and parents.)

It seems most expedient at this time to suggest tentative procedures without commitment to any one. Standardizing the qualifications now for guidance personnel in elementary schools without clear evidence from research that persons with those qualifications make the best guidance consultants for all schools may jeopardize the program by limiting its scope and quality. Therefore, the following hypotheses are offered to encourage experimentation in the selection and graduate preparation of guidance consultants:

1. That the candidate's background be rich in liberal arts with the undergraduate major in elementary education, or perhaps in psychology, sociology, or related areas.
2. That the candidate be required to have had several years' employment in a related field in a school, clinic, or comparable agency. In such work, through experiences in living, he gains background and maturity, both necessary qualifications of a guidance consultant. Some work experience with adults is also desirable.
3. That flexibility characterize the planning of a graduate student's program. It should not be assumed that every candidate for a degree in elementary school guidance has had the same background and needs the same courses.

An appraisal of the candidate's academic history and experience may reveal that he is familiar with some information, concepts, and techniques important in work of the guidance consultant. An individualized graduate program also makes it possible for a prospective guidance consultant to take courses to meet special needs of a particular school in which he expects to be employed.

4. That the preparation for guidance consultants be specifically tailored to the functions of elementary school guidance, which may be telescoped and expressed for convenience, as "identification and prevention." The professional knowledge and techniques required in these functions are found in such fields as elementary school education, guidance, psychology, social work, and health. Therefore, professional preparation may well include these fields.

5. That a comprehensive and extensive internship in elementary school guidance be accepted in lieu of teaching experience.

6. That appropriate professional experience in working with children be accepted in lieu of teaching experience.

7. That the candidate qualify in personality characteristics. It is difficult to evaluate objectively the quality of personality that can reach and assist children and consult with adults who work with children. With an awareness of traits to be sought, however, an approach might be made to a subjective evaluation of personality.

A promising candidate may be described in these terms: He is a person who enjoys helping others and who, by responding sensitively, is able to produce an atmosphere of mutual liking and respect with both children and adults. His natural endowment and education give him significant insight into the feeling and thinking of people, especially children, and an appreciation of their values, which may differ from his own. He is able to help parents and teachers understand the child who needs to belong or who needs to be alone; to encourage, rather than stifle, those tendencies that lead to creative thinking and to respect both areas of conformity and areas of individuality.

EDUATION anticipates strides in communicating a vast increase of knowledge to students through the use of programmed instruction (teaching machines), airborne television, language laboratory equipment, and other new teaching equipment and teaching techniques. It is logical to expect the schools to meet the bombardment of knowledge with new techniques and personnel. The most efficient teacher cannot do the job that the times demand and also serve as guidance consultant as well as psychologist and social worker. These persons are needed by the significant number of children who have major problems and by the much larger number of children who occa-

sionally need specialized assistance. In addition, all children profit indirectly from the continuous presence of a guidance consultant who helps teachers understand the perplexing phases of a normal child's development and the danger signals of trouble.

The teacher will continue to be the person who works most closely with each child. He will have the opportunity to teach children who are ready to learn when deterrents to learning have been reduced through the services of guidance consultants and other pupil personnel.

Guidance consultants are at the center of guidance programs in elementary schools. Patterns of selection and preparation of these persons now are varied. As the movement grows, experimentation and evaluation should determine the preparation which can contribute most effectively to the needs of children. In the meantime, we urge schools to use an eclectic approach in organizing elementary school guidance programs within pupil personnel services to the end that each child shall benefit from a cooperative effort of all professional personnel.

The authors invite persons involved in directing programs, conducting research, or writing about guidance services in elementary schools to send materials concerning this subject to the following address:

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